

SCOWCRAFT, L.L.

~~DIS 171~~ (SEE 57)

*Following its commentary on "Israeli aggression," including the sinking of a Soviet merchant ship TASS notes there were no "victims" among Soviet sailors*

TASS: NO VICTIMS AMONG SOVIET SAILORS

L121906 MOSCOW TASS IN ENGLISH 1903 GMT 12 OCT 73 L

(EXCERPT) MOSCOW, OCTOBER 12, TASS--THE SOVIET MERCHANT SHIP "ILYA MECHNIKOV," ABOUT 12,000 TONS DISPLACEMENT, WHICH ARRIVED IN THE SYRIAN PORT OF TARTUS WITH EQUIPMENT FOR THE HYDROPOWER COMPLEX NOW UNDER CONSTRUCTION ON THE EUPHRATES, WAS SUNK TODAY BY ISRAELI MISSILE LAUNCHES.

AT 1 HOUR AT NIGHT WHEN THE SHIP WAS ON THE ROAD-STEAD OF THE SYRIAN PORT, ISRAELI LAUNCHES ROCKET-SHELLED THE TOWN AND PORT FROM THE SEA. DURING THE SHELLING TWO MISSILES HIT THE RIGHT SIDE OF THE SOVIET SHIP FORMING TWO HOLES AND CAUSING A FIRE ON BOARD.

THE CREW STARTED FIGHTING THE FIRE AIDED BY SAILORS FROM OTHER SOVIET SHIPS IN PORT. DESPITE ALL THEIR EFFORTS THEY WERE UNABLE TO SAVE THE TURBINE-DRIVEN "ILYA MECHNIKOV". THERE ARE NO VICTIMS AMONG THE SOVIET SAILORS.

12 OCT 2050Z LAM/MA